

Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission

Marketing and Destination Development Goal Setting Sessions

Summary Report

Prepared by Fountainworks

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Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission

Summary for Marketing and Destination Development Goal Setting Sessions

Introduction

The Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission (STCDC) held two committee work sessions on May 26, 2010 at the Plaza in Salisbury, NC. The objectives of these sessions were to set goals and make recommendations for the upcoming FY 2010-2011.

These work sessions were designed to build from the STCDC's mission, vision and values session, which was held in March 2010. Each two-hour session was facilitated and included the opportunity for participants to interact in open conversation, to share and build on ideas.

This summary report provides an overview of key results from each work session and details participant comments, in their words. Comments were captured as conversation flowed and do not reflect any priority unless otherwise noted.

Marketing Committee – Goal Setting Session

The session began with the committee reviewing the March 26th STCDC planning retreat report in order to establish a framework for the discussion on marketing -- defined as the **driver** for increasing the number of visitors. The four framework areas for marketing included the following:

<p><u>Product (What is STCDC marketing?)</u></p> <p>✓ <i>Authentic</i> (<i>authentic is described below</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -History -Art/Entertainment -Family -Sporting events -Organized group travel -Main street (shopping/ downtown Salisbury) -Colleges, universities, seminary -Signature events -Food 	<p><u>Marketing Budget (How much money to spend?)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall STCDC budget \$300,000 -Dedicated marketing budget \$194,000 (note: this budget can be adjusted by SSTCDC)
<p><u>Market (Who is STCDC's target market?)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business travelers -Day trippers -Amateur sports -Heritage tourists -Organized groups -Families -Rail travelers -Local market 	<p><u>Other Resources (What else can supplement the marketing budget?)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rowan TDA -DSI -Cultural partners -Tourism businesses -City of Salisbury -Rowan County (parks and recreation; fairgrounds) -State Division of Travel and Tourism -DMA-NC (Destination Marketing Association)

Marketing: Current Situation Assessment

After establishing the framework for their discussion, participants were asked to assess current tourism marketing in Salisbury and Rowan County. Specifically, they were asked: What's working well in terms of current marketing efforts; what are current challenges in marketing; and what initial opportunity ideas do they have to build on what's working and to address their specific challenges.

At the conclusion of this segment, participants were asked to choose their top three ideas by placing 'stickie dots' on the wall chart where the ideas were recorded. Following is a summary of their current situation assessment for marketing, with a notation for number of 'dots' each opportunity idea received.

<p><u>What's Working</u></p> <p>Electronic platform</p> <p>Servicing – take very good care of tourists</p> <p>Adaptability of sites, businesses (investment in product)</p> <p>Entrepreneurial mindset</p> <p>Billboard I-85</p> <p>Radio ads</p> <p>Relationship-based</p> <p>Connecting group travelers to assets in the community (e.g. welcome bags)</p>	<p><u>Opportunity Ideas</u></p> <p>Community calendar</p> <p>Hotel magazine directories</p> <p>•••Tourism channel</p> <p>Social media presence</p> <p>••Internet marketing (I phone app)</p> <p>••Festivals – new and existing festivals</p> <p>Better utilize existing staff</p> <p>•••Kiosks (Greenville model, point of contact)</p> <p>•A strong state cooperative marketing presence</p> <p>•••Integrated tourism and marketing plan (city-county 3 year plan)</p> <p>••Funds for getting “big groups” in here – and drive them to weak spots</p> <p>Funds for events</p> <p>Fairgrounds</p> <p>••Downtown event center</p> <p>Parks</p>
<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p>Marketing to casual traveler</p> <p>Multiple points for tourists—don't always connect the dots</p> <p>Time/staff – dedicated staff for marketing, booking sales</p> <p>Timing of large bookings</p> <p>Formalized relationship between city and county</p> <p>Cultural partners – starved for money, plans, training, collaboration</p> <p>Different organizations are at different places in capacity</p>	

Goal Setting

After their current situation assessment for marketing, participants moved to goal setting. For the purpose of this working session, a goal was defined as what they want to accomplish in the next year. Working in pairs and then as a full group, participants discussed and recommended nine priority goals for marketing. These goals, which address marketing at multiple levels, are as follows:

1. **Advance electronic marketing platform-(Salisbury-Rowan I Phone/Droid App)**
2. **Growth in group travel**
3. **A tourism channel**
4. **Populate community calendar and publicize locally**
5. **Launch an integrated incentive based POS travel program (informational kiosks)**
6. **Formalize relationship with Rowan TDA to maximize effective use of available tourism dollars**
7. **Support events (criteria must be met)**
8. **Build the Co-Op marketing effort (growth in lead generation and conversion)**
9. **Complete integrated cultural and tourism marketing plan (cultural partner SWOT analysis)**

At the conclusion of this segment, the group recognized that they would need to further refine and prioritize the nine goals. As a next step, they will report back to full STCDC for further discussion and consideration of next steps.

Destination Development Committee – Goal Setting Session

The destination development committee goal setting session began with discussion to clarify the mission of destination development -- how it is distinct from marketing and specifically what destination development funds could be used for.

Following is a summary of the categories of destination development items that could be considered for funding. After identifying these categories, the committee agreed that 1) planning/studies and 2) capital expenditures were the most important areas for funding.

•Planning/studies	Public amenities (linked with capital expenditures)
•Capital expenditures—signage, public bathrooms, trash cans	Staff
Partnership—improve programming	Bid fees
Transportation	Sponsorship
Events-stage, speakers	

Investment Portfolio: “What we do for visitors when they are here”

Next, the participants brainstormed potential destination development items and grouped them in one of four categories:

“Sow” What can be started?	“Grow” What can be expanded?
“Plow” What could be cut back?	“Harvest” What should be maintained?

After presenting their ideas to the full group, participants were asked to rank their top 3 destination development ideas using “sticky dots.” (1st choice: green dot; 2nd choice: yellow dot; 3rd choice: red dot)

Development master plan and way finding signage received the most votes. Below is a summary of all ideas and the number of votes they received:

“Sow” -Development Master Plan-integrated with marketing plan (mindful of philanthropic community (3 red, 3 yellow, 1 green)) -Green Space/Amphitheatre with restrooms (1 red dot) -Christmas Lights -Civil War Prison Site Development -Tourism Radio (could be through FITH)	“Grow” -Way-finding (4 green dots, 5 yellow dots) -Kiosks (2 green dots, 2 red dots) -Event support (pops and nutcracker; physical structures including tents and chairs and trash cans); -Christmas event, October tour (3 red dots) -Public art (1 green dot, 1 yellow dot)
“Plow” -BBQ festival	“Harvest” -Trolley (2 green dots)

Guiding principles for Prioritizing Destination Development Items

The participants concluded the session by developing a set of draft guiding principles which could be used for prioritizing destination development items: These included the following:

- ✓ Balance new destination development items with existing items
- ✓ Synchronize spending with other plans and events
- ✓ Build a great community – (balance spending on one-time events with spending that benefits the long term quality of life of the community)
- ✓ Address immediate needs (some spending for upcoming FY should make an immediate impact and be visible)
- ✓ Balance short term needs with building long term assets (buy 1 sculpture per year)
- ✓ Attract new visitors
- ✓ Enhance visitors' experience
- ✓ Be aware of ongoing maintenance